a database which stores user-specific customization data, the customization data specifying preferences of the registered users with respect to the online services of the Merchant sites; and

a database which stores contribution information related to registrants and beneficiary information, the contribution information which allows one-time or reoccurring contributions to specified beneficiaries; and

a database which stores the gift certificates and related transactions; and

a database which stores Merchant information, the Merchant information specifying communication information necessary for establishing secure connections between the Merchant and the Gift Certificate system; and

a database which stores Manufacturer information, the Manufacturer information contains the relationships of which resellers sell the manufacturers products; and

an authentication protocol for allowing the gift certificate site to authenticate users, manufacturers, and merchants and communication links with the partner systems, the authentication protocol implemented by software components of the Manufacturer, Merchant, and Gift Certificate sites.

a purchase validation protocol between the electronic gift certificate service and the Merchant for authorizing the purchase based on the restrictions applied by the purchaser.

2. (Removed without prejudice or disclaimer)

3. (Amended) The system of claim 1, whereby the purchaser may place restrictions on the use of the gift certificate.

4. (Amended) The system of claim 1, whereby the purchaser may track the use of the gift certificate down to the individual product or products purchased.

8. (Amended) The system of claim 6, whereby contributions can be made anonymously at the time of purchase.

19. (Removed without prejudice or disclaimer)

20. (Removed without prejudice or disclaimer)

21. (Removed without prejudice or disclaimer)

22. (Removed without prejudice or disclaimer)